



SEPTEMBER

29 & 30

8:00 pm

The Theater at WHATCo

15 FRANK E. RODGERS BLVD S., HARRISON, NJ

(FREE PARKING IN THE FENCED LOT AT JERSEY ST.)

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CHOOSE**

what co
arts & theater company

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WHATCONJ.ORG/TICKETS**

The September Shakespeare performances are presented through a special collaboration with TNT, WHATCo, and the Hackensack Performing Arts Center.

 **PSEG** Education Spotlight sponsored by the PSE&G Foundation.

A Midsummer Night's Dream
by William Shakespeare

Study Guide

Presented through WHATCo. Spotlight on Education

August 2023

West Hudson Arts and Theatre Company

Mission Statement

To be a cultural resource that will enrich and invigorate the West Hudson community as a whole while embracing, educating and entertaining people of all ages, cultures and abilities.

Through a range of quality theatrical productions we seek to stimulate, celebrate and enhance the understanding of theater while fostering and inspiring growth and creativity in our members.

We strive to be a resource for both the residents and businesses of the greater West Hudson area and to enrich the cultural depth, education and vitality of the community at large.

Goals

To enliven and enhance the cultural life of the community at large and its visitors.

To contribute to the economic vitality of the area's (East Newark, Harrison and Kearny) downtowns and the growth of regional tourism.

To secure a local facility/building to better facilitate WHATCo's performance and educational goals and to provide fiscal and housing security for the future.

To develop an educational program to help potential performers and crew to:

Increase self confidence.

Enrich their understanding and appreciation of the arts.

Prepare for future opportunities at WHATCo and elsewhere.

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About The Writer

William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare was a renowned English poet, playwright, and actor born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon. His birthday is most commonly celebrated on 23 April, which is also believed to be the date he died in 1616.

Shakespeare was a prolific writer during the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages of British theatre (sometimes called the English Renaissance or the Early Modern Period). Shakespeare's plays are perhaps his most enduring legacy, but they are not all he wrote. Shakespeare's poems also remain popular to this day. (Shakespeare.org/uk)

Shakespeare's Works

COMEDIES

All's Well That Ends Well
As You Like It
Comedy of Errors
Love's Labour's Lost
Measure for Measure
Merchant of Venice
Merry Wives of Windsor
Midsummer Night's Dream
Much Ado about Nothing
Taming of the Shrew
Tempest
Twelfth Night
Two Gentlemen of Verona
Winter's Tale

HISTORIES

Henry IV, Part I
Henry IV, Part II
Henry V
Henry VI, Part I
Henry VI, Part II
Henry VI, Part III
Henry VIII

King John
Pericles
Richard II
Richard III

TRAGEDIES

Antony and Cleopatra
Coriolanus
Cymbeline
Hamlet
Julius Caesar
King Lear
Macbeth
Othello
Romeo and Juliet
Timon of Athens
Titus Andronicus
Troilus and Cressida

Synopsis

Act 1 Scene 1

The play opens with Theseus and Hippolyta who are four days away from their wedding. Theseus is confronted by Egeus and his daughter Hermia, who is in love with Lysander, resistant to her father's demand that she marry Demetrius, whom he has arranged for her to marry. Enraged, Egeus invokes an ancient Athenian law before Duke Theseus, whereby a daughter needs to marry a suitor chosen by her father, or else face death. The two lovers both deny his choice and make a secret plan to escape into the forest for Lysander's aunt's house, in order to run away from Theseus. Hermia tells their plans to Helena, her best friend, who pines unrequitedly for Demetrius, who broke up with her to be with Hermia. Desperate to reclaim Demetrius's love, Helena tells Demetrius about the plan and he follows them in hopes of finding Hermia.

Act 1 Scene 2

The mechanicals, Peter Quince and fellow players Nick Bottom, Francis Flute, Robin Starveling, Tom Snout and Snug plan to put on a play for the wedding of the Duke and the Queen, "the most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe". Quince reads the names of characters and bestows them on the players. Nick Bottom, who is playing the main role of Pyramus, is over-enthusiastic and wants to dominate others by suggesting himself for the characters of Thisbe, the Lion, and Pyramus at the same time. Quince insists that Bottom can only play the role of Pyramus. Bottom would also rather be a tyrant and recites some lines of Ercles. Bottom is told by Quince that he would do the Lion so terribly as to frighten the duchess and ladies enough for the Duke and Lords to have the players hanged. Snug remarks that he needs the Lion's part because he is "slow of study". Quince assures Snug that the role of the lion is "nothing but roaring." Quince then ends the meeting telling his actors "at the Duke's oak we meet".

Act 2 Scene 1

Oberon, king of the fairies, and Titania, his queen, have come to the forest outside Athens. Titania tells Oberon that she plans to stay there until she has attended Theseus and Hippolyta's wedding. Oberon and Titania are estranged because Titania refuses to give her Indian changeling to Oberon for use as his "knight" or "henchman", since the child's mother was one of Titania's worshippers. Oberon seeks to punish Titania's disobedience. He calls upon Robin "Puck" Goodfellow, his "shrewd and knavish sprite", to help him concoct a magical juice derived from a flower called "love-in-idleness", which turns from white to purple when struck by Cupid's arrow. When the concoction is applied to the eyelids of a sleeping person, that person, upon waking, falls in love with the first living thing they perceive. He instructs Puck to retrieve the flower with the hope that he might make Titania fall in love with an animal of the forest and thereby shame her into giving up the little Indian boy. Helena and Demetrius enter, with she continuously making advances towards Demetrius, promising to love him more than Hermia. However, he rebuffs her with cruel insults. Observing this, Oberon orders Puck to spread some of the magical juice from the flower on the eyelids of the young Athenian man.

Act 2 Scene 2

As Titania is lulled to sleep by her fairies, Oberon sneaks up on her and places the flower juice on her eyes, exiting the stage afterwards. Lysander and Hermia enter, lost and exhausted from the journey. Hermia rejects Lysander's advances to sleep together, and the two lie down on different corners. Puck enters and mistakes Lysander for Demetrius, not having actually seen either before, and administers the juice to the sleeping Lysander. Helena, coming across him, wakes him while attempting to determine whether he is dead or asleep. Upon this happening, Lysander immediately falls in love with Helena. Helena, thinking Lysander is mocking her for losing Demetrius, runs away with Lysander following her. When Hermia wakes up after dreaming a snake ate her heart, she sees that Lysander is gone and goes out in the woods to find him.

Act 3 Scene 1

Meanwhile, Quince and his band of five laborers ("rude mechanicals", as they are described by Puck) have arranged to perform their play about Pyramus and Thisbe for Theseus's wedding and venture into the forest, near Titania's bower, for their rehearsal. Quince leads the actors in their rehearsal of the play. Bottom is spotted by Puck, who (taking his name to be another word for a jackass) transforms his head into that of a donkey. When Bottom returns for his next lines, the other workmen run screaming in terror: They claim that they are haunted, much to Bottom's confusion. Determined to await his friends, he begins to sing to himself. Titania, having received the love-potion, is awakened by Bottom's singing and immediately falls in love with him. She lavishes him with the attention of her and her fairies, and while she is in this state of devotion, Oberon takes the changeling boy.

Act 3 Scene 2

Oberon sees Demetrius still following Hermia. When Demetrius goes to sleep, Oberon condemns Puck's mistake and sends him to get Helena while he charms Demetrius's eyes. Upon waking up, he sees Lysander and Helena and instantly falls for her. Now, under the spell, the two men have fallen for her. However, Helena is convinced that her two suitors are mocking her, as neither loved her originally. Hermia finds Lysander and asks why he left her, but Lysander claims he never loved Hermia, instead loving Helena. This soon turns into a quarrel between the two ladies, with Helena chiding Hermia for joining in the mockery session, followed by the latter furiously charging at her for stealing her true love's heart and blaming her for the supposed 'mockery'. Oberon and Puck decide that they must resolve this conflict, and by the morning, none of them will have any memory of what happened, as if it were a dream. Oberon arranges everything so Helena, Hermia, Demetrius and Lysander will all believe they have been dreaming when they awaken. Puck distracts Lysander and Demetrius from fighting over Helena's love by mimicking their voices and leading them apart. Eventually, all four find themselves separately falling asleep in the glade. Once they fall asleep, Puck administers the love potion to Lysander again, returning his love to Hermia again, and cast another spell over the four Athenian lovers, claiming all will be well in the morning. Once they awaken, the lovers assume that whatever happened was a dream and not reality.

Act 4 Scene 1

Having achieved his goals, Oberon releases Titania and orders Puck to remove the donkey's head from Bottom. The fairies then disappear, and Theseus and Hippolyta arrive on the scene, during an early morning hunt. They find the lovers still sleeping in the glade. They wake up the lovers and, since Demetrius no longer loves Hermia, Theseus over-rules Egeus's demands and arranges a group wedding. The lovers at first believe they are still in a dream and cannot recall what has happened. The lovers decide that the night's events must have been a dream, as they walk back to Athens.

Act 4 Scene 2

After they exit, Bottom awakes, and he too decides that he must have experienced a dream "past the wit of man". At Quince's house, Quince and his team of actors worry that Bottom has gone missing. Quince laments that Bottom is the only man who can take on the lead role of Pyramus. Bottom returns, and the actors get ready to put on "Pyramus and Thisbe".

Act 5

The final scene in the play, Theseus, Hippolyta and the lovers watch the six workmen perform "Pyramus and Thisbe" in Athens. The mechanicals are so terrible at playing their roles that the guests laugh as if it were meant to be a comedy, and everyone retires to bed. Afterwards, Oberon, Titania, Puck, and other fairies enter, and bless the house and its occupants with good fortune. After all the other characters leave, Puck "restores amends" and suggests that what the audience experienced might just be a dream.

Characters

Theseus—Duke of Athens

Hippolyta—Queen of the Amazons

Egeus—father of Hermia

Philostrate—Master of the Revels

The Lovers

Hermia—daughter of Egeus, in love with Lysander

Lysander—in love with Hermia

Demetrius—suitor to Hermia

Helena—in love with Demetrius

The Players

Peter Quince—a carpenter

Nick Bottom—a weaver

Francis Flute—a bellows-mender

Tom Snout—a tinker

Snug—a joiner

Robin Starveling—a tailor

The Fairies

Oberon—King of the Fairies

Titania—Queen of the Fairies

Robin "Puck" Goodfellow—a mischievous sprite with magical powers

Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth and Mustardseed—fairy servants to Titania

Discussion Questions

About the production:

- 1.) What did you like most about the production?
- 2.) Which story did you find the most compelling and why?
- 3.) What did you think of the design elements (lighting, set, costumes)?
- 4.) What was the audience's relationship with each character?
- 5.) What did you like about the world of the play?

About the play:

- 1.) What role does love play in the story?
- 2.) What role does magic play in the story?
- 3.) What role do dreams play in the story?
- 4.) How did character relationships change?
- 5.) How did each group's actions affect the other characters in the play?
- 6.) What is the main theme(s) of the play?
- 7.) What are the conflicts of the play?
- 8.) What similarities do you see between Thisbe and Pyramus' story compared to the other character's stories?

Theatre Etiquette

- Arrive at the theater on time.
- Visit the restroom before the performance begins.
- Turn off your cell phone. Do not speak on the phone or text during the performance.
- Pay attention to announcements that are made prior to the show about the rules of the theater you are attending and the location of the fire exits.
- Don't speak during the performance unless you are encouraged by the performers to participate.
- Remember that the Overture (introductory music) in musical theater is part of the performance, so be quiet when it begins.
- Do not take pictures during the performance.
- Remain in your seat for the entire performance.
- Don't put or throw anything on the stage.
- Do laugh when the performance is funny.
- Do applaud when it is appropriate during the performance.
- Do applaud when the performance is over... this tells the performers and crew that you appreciate their work.
- Stand and applaud if you really thought the show was great (a standing ovation).
- Do not whistle, stomp your feet, or scream out to the performers except for a Bravo or Brava.